

Appl. No. 10/729,768
Amdt. dated June 29, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed March 15, 2005

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently amended): ~~A retractor~~ An apparatus comprising:

a shaft having open proximal and distal ends defining a lumen therethrough; and
an inflatable bladder disposed at ~~an~~ the distal end of the shaft and in fluid communication with the lumen, wherein the inflatable bladder ~~has, upon inflation, is capable of separating adjacent layers of tissue thereby creating a working space~~ a non-uniform and has a shape selected from the group consisting of: eccentric, conical, and wedge-shaped.

Claim 16 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder does not stretch when fully inflated.

Claim 17 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at pressures from about 10 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

Claim 18 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 17, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at inflation pressures from about 100 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

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Claim 19 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is rigid.

Claim 20 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is flexible.

Claim 21 (Currently amended): The ~~retractor~~ apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a cannula having a passage which receives the shaft to deploy the bladder at a target site in tissue.

Claim 22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 15, wherein the bladder comprises a wedge-shaped bladder.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 23, wherein the bladder comprises a wedge-shaped bladder having an accordion structure.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 15, wherein the bladder has an accordion structure.

Claim 26 (New): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein, upon inflation, longitudinal movement of the inflatable bladder separates adjacent layers of tissue.